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Shortgrassers are spreading coyote stories in big volume. Around the coffee houses, the news is grim and frightening.

Former predator boundaries are rapidly disintegrating. Out on the west side of the Shortgrass Country, thousands of acres are empty of sheep. To the north and to the east, the epidemic has spread.

Fresh weaned calves have been broken out of corrals by coyotes. Cow herders wonder how many baby calves will be lost this winter. Coyotes are running rampant. The herders, as usual, are caught in an undertow that is the worst in many a day.

As the environmentalist desired, nature is seeking her balance. The problem now is going to be how to balance the herders. I talked to an old boy from out west at the last cow sale who has watched his neighbors turn back range that was carrying 22,000 head of mother sheep.

Coyotes used three years to take over that big scope of country. The men who were fighting them were as tough a bunch of sheep operators as the world had known since shepherds trailed woolies across the Holy Land on camels.

I would have sworn that the Atomic Energy couldn't run those hombres away from an ice cream stand, much less drive them from their homeland. They are the breed that it takes to fight the alkali desert. Any of their hides would make an excellent lizard skin purse.

But they had to stop. The fellow I was talking to acted like he was about half mad over the deal.

I think the reason he was mad was because some of the victims were his brothers. Folks, as you know, can get mighty touchy when their family is kicked around.

The interview was a disappointment. Before it was over, I was wishing I had asked about the Middle East crisis or something pleasant like the political scene in Washington.

He was too emotional to be fair. I'm not ever going to ask him again to explain an outrage against all human reason. Congress had better not call him when the investigation starts on the food and fiber famine. When the day comes that the nation is eating fried beetles, men like him won't be any help. He'd blow up so bad that the makeup artist couldn't keep the paint on.

On the same day of the sale, my brother sent me a copy of a magazine story that would have convinced Little Red Riding Hood that wolves are kindhearted. In plain English, the writer stated that coyotes were proven not to be sheep and cow killers.

A big airline company was responsible for distributing the magazine. My brother suggested that I boycott the line. Like I told him, I'm not going to do any traveling as long as there are people like that writer loose on the streets. He must have been suffering from an unsuccessful brain transplant. Dumbheads such as that should be given special education courses. The combination of ink and paper can sure cause a lot of confusion.

Time has run out on the coyote problem. Wool warehouses are decreasing. Sheep outfits are folding faster then fenders on a busy throughway. More bad news comes in everyday. Islands of uncontaminated country comes smaller. No one can keep up with the onslaught of the killers.

I don't know what it is going to take to awaken the nation. I dread to think of winter putting the predators on the prowl.